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Date of Deposit: December 12, 2000

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Typed or Printed Name of Person Mailing Paper or Fee: Shirley Fajardo

Signature: Shirley Fajardo

PATENT  
Docket No. P1230

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

APPLICANT: NOEL LEE

SERIAL NO.: TO BE ASSIGNED

FILED: DECEMBER 12, 2000

FOR: APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE  
PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL  
POWER SOURCE

BOX PATENT APPLICATION  
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.131(a)**

Dear Sir:

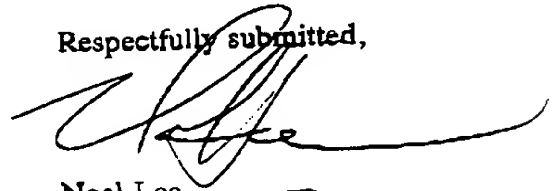
I, Noel Lee, declare as follows:

1. I am the inventor of the subject matter of the above-identified patent application.
2. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1971 from California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo, California.
3. My occupational experience includes serving as Chief Executive Officer of Monster Cable Products, Inc. (1983-present) and as a Laser-Fusion Design Engineer at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories (1971-1976).

4. I have received the following honors:  
Northern California Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Ernst & Young (June 23, 2000);  
Distinguished Corporate Executive Award from the Asian Business League of San Francisco (June 22, 1996); and  
Small Business Owner of the Year Award from the San Francisco Small Business Network Dealerscope Consumer Electronics Marketplace Magazine's Hall of Fame (June 5, 1997).
5. I have invented the present invention which utilizes human factors considerations. The present invention, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL POWER SOURCE, comprising a solid color-coded device having peripheral device identification, provides a solid color image which is easier to see and recognize than the cited art patterned image (striped and ringed) devices, and therefore, better facilitates correct connection of the peripheral devices to the color-coded housing areas.
6. The Kensington invention, cited by the Examiner, is believed to be an attempt to copy the present invention by a former employee, engineer David Pitcher, who was employed by Monster Cable Products, Inc. from April 24, 1991, through January 28, 1994. Engineer David Pitcher was subsequently employed as a consultant to Monster Cable Products, Inc. for approximately one year thereafter (i.e., ~ January 1995). David Pitcher had full access to Monster Cable Products' proprietary information regarding conception and reduction to practice of the present invention (See hereto attached Exhibit A containing a proprietary drawing of the present invention signed by David Pitcher and dated July 28, 1994). Therefore, the invention is believed to have been commonly owned at the time the invention was made. David Pitcher has been subsequently employed by Kensington and was directly involved in the subsequent development of the cited Kensington SmartSockets Strip Model and Adapter Model.

7. I conceived of the present invention in May, 1993, antedating the printed publication disclosing the Kensington invention. The first commercially viable prototype was manufactured by Monster Cable Products, Inc. in September, 1997, generally in accordance with the proprietary drawing contained in hereto attached Exhibit A.
8. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-references application or any patent issuing thereon.

Respectfully submitted,



Noel Lee  
Chief Executive Officer  
Monster Cable Products, Inc.

Date:

 Nov. 16, 2000

NL:mld

November 16, 2000

LARIVIERE, GRUBMAN & PAYNE, LLP

Post Office Box 3140

Monterey, CA 93942

(831) 649-8800

[illegible]

## EXHIBIT A

### Sales Figures by Good Guys, Inc.

Monster Cable Products, Inc.

Model Number

No. Units Sold

Total Sales

MP AV600

13,953

\$265,349.11

MP AV800 RP

5,643

\$272,988.14

MP HT800 HP

9,877

\$744,682.61

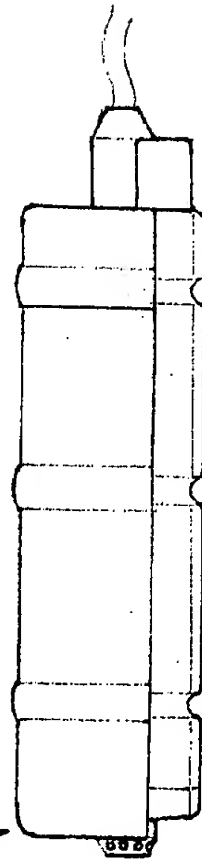
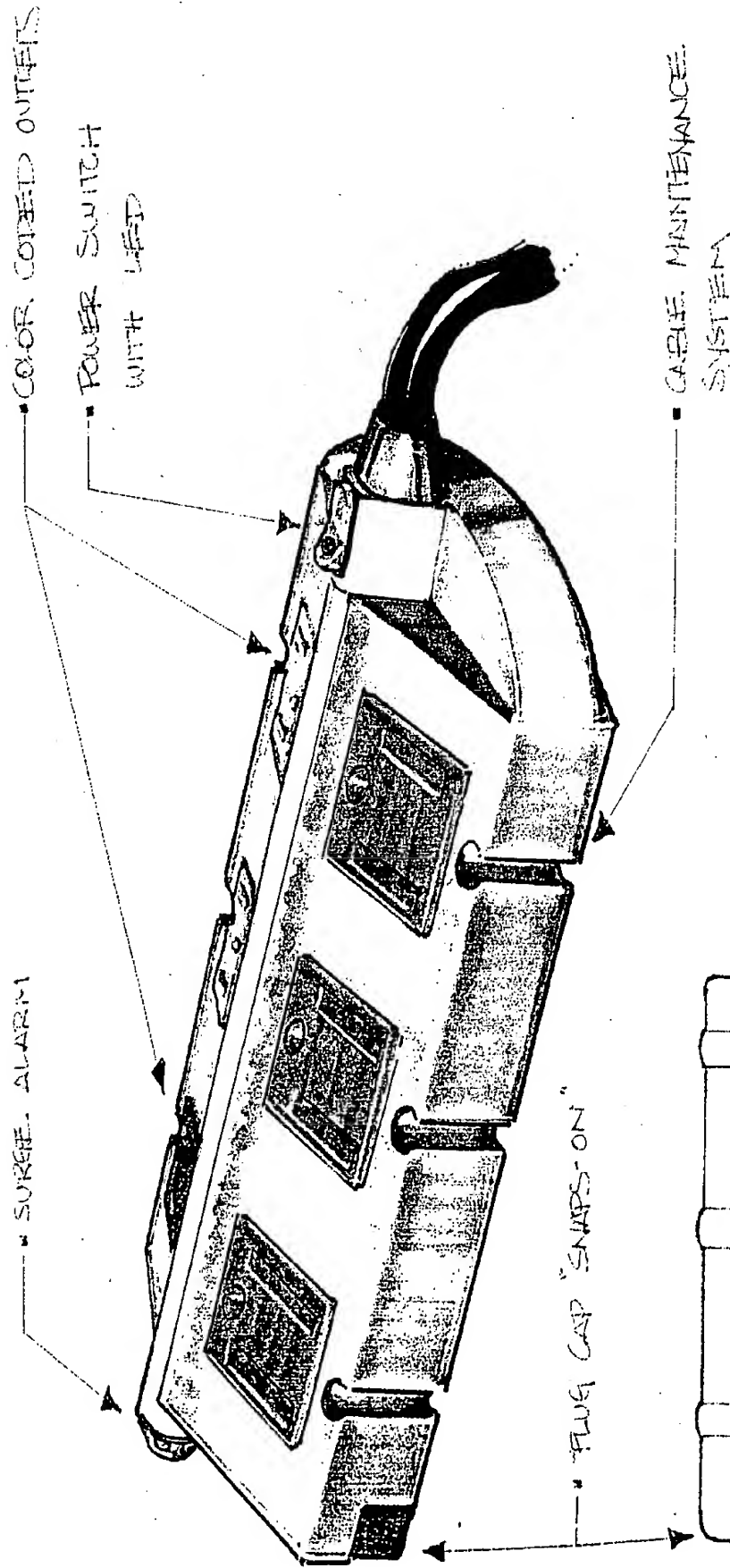
MPHTS800 HP

2,184

\$204,776.97

That all the good work that is done in the world is done by the good people of the world.

CODE 11-11-11



SIDE PROFILE

# MONSTER POWER PLATE

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POWER SOURCE

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.132**

Dear Sir:

I, Noel Lee, declare as follows:

1. I am the inventor of the subject matter of the above-identified patent application.
2. I received a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1971 from California Polytechnic University San Luis Obispo in San Luis Obispo, California.
3. My occupational experience includes serving as Chief Executive Officer of Monster Cable Products, Inc. (1983-present) and as a Laser-Fusion Design Engineer at Lawrence Livermore Laboratories (1971-1976).



4. I have received the following honors:
- Northern California Entrepreneur of the Year Award from Ernst & Young (June 23, 2000);
- Distinguished Corporate Executive Award from the Asian Business League of San Francisco (June 22, 1996); and
- Small Business Owner of the Year Award from the San Francisco Small Business Network Dealerscope Consumer Electronics Marketplace Magazine's Hall of Fame (June 5, 1997).
5. I have invented the present invention which utilizes human factors considerations. The present invention, APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL POWER SOURCE, comprising a solid color-coded device having peripheral device identification, provides a solid image which is easier to see and recognize than the cited art patterned image (striped and ringed) devices, and therefore, better facilitates correct connection of the peripheral devices to each color-coded housing portion.
6. The Kensington invention, cited by the Examiner, is believed to be an attempt to copy the present invention by a former employee, engineer David Pitcher, who was employed by Monster Cable Products, Inc. from April 24, 1991 through January 28, 1994. Engineer David Pitcher was subsequently employed as a consultant to Monster Cable Products, Inc. for approximately one year thereafter (i.e., ~ January 1995). David Pitcher had full access to Monster Cable Products' proprietary information regarding conception and reduction to practice of the present invention (See hereto attached Exhibit A containing a proprietary drawing of the present invention signed by David Pitcher and dated July 28, 1994). Therefore, the invention is believed to have been commonly owned at the time the invention was made. David Pitcher has been subsequently employed by Kensington and was directly involved in the subsequent development of the cited Kensington SmartSockets Strip Model and Adapter Model.

7. A need for a solid color-coded central power source has been long felt in the electronic components industry. Although stymied by the peripheral device connection confusion imparted by plain plug strips, the industry had made no progress toward any solution to the problem. No other manufacturer has been known to have made a solid color-coded central power supply having peripheral device identification prior to my invention. Further, the present invention is currently experiencing record sales and has dominated the market sector in the area of plug strips both domestically and in Asia. In addition, two large retailers, Good Guys™ and Sound Advice™ have completely discontinued sales of the competitor's plug strip (Panamax™) and are exclusively carrying only the present invention central power supply (See Exhibit B containing Monster Cable Products, Inc.'s sales figures; also see herewith submitted Declaration under Rule 132 of Karen Johnson for Good Guys, Inc.).
8. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-references application or any patent issuing thereon.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Noel Lee  
Chief Executive Officer  
Monster Cable Products, Inc.

Date: Nov. 16, 2000

NLE:md  
November 16, 2000  
LARIVIERE, GRUBMAN & PAYNE, LLP  
Post Office Box 3140  
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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.132**

Dear Sir:

I, Karen Johnson, declare as follows:

1. I am employed by the Good Guys, Inc., a major retailer of the product which constitutes the subject matter of the above-identified patent application.
2. As Manager of Accessories and Media, I have been involved in the buying of the Monster product for our electronics retail chain stores.

3. A need for a solid color-coded central power source has been long felt in the electronic components retail industry. Although retail consumers have been stymied by the peripheral device connection confusion imparted by plain plug strips, the manufacturing industry had made no progress toward the Monster solution as no other manufacturer was known to have made a solid color-coded central power supply having peripheral device identification prior to the present invention. Further, the Monster product is currently experiencing record sales through our retail chain and has dominated the market sector in the area of plug strips. In addition, we have completely discontinued sales of the competitor's plug strip (Panamax™) and are exclusively carrying only the Monster color-coded central power supply (See Exhibit A containing our retail sales figures and market share data).
4. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-references application or any patent issuing thereon.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Johnson  
Manager of Accessories and Media  
Good Guys, Inc.

Date: 

KJ:mld  
November , 2000  
LARIVIERE, GRUBMAN & PAYNE, LLP  
Post Office Box 3140  
Monterey, CA 93942  
(831) 649-8800

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WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231

**DECLARATION UNDER 37 C.F.R. 1.132**

Dear Sir:

I, Dr. Albert Mehrabian, declare as follows:

1. I am an expert in the areas of Environmental Psychology and Social Psychology.
2. I received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Masters of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering in 1961 from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Thereafter, I was awarded the degree Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology in 1964 from Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

3. My occupational experience includes serving as:  
Psychology Intern, Worcester State Hospital (1963-1964);  
Consultant, Veterans' Administration (1968-1973);  
Chairman of Graduate Admissions Committee, UCLA Department of Psychology (1968-1970);  
Chairman of Staffing Committee, UCLA Department of Psychology (1987-1994);  
Assistant Professor of Psychology, UCLA Department of Psychology (1964-1970);  
Associate Professor of Psychology, UCLA Department of Psychology (1970-1976);  
Professor of Psychology, UCLA Department of Psychology (1976-1994); and  
Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UCLA Department of Psychology (1994-present).
4. My editorial experience includes serving as:  
Consulting Editor, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (1973-1976);  
Consulting Editor, Sociometry (1974-1977);  
Member of Editorial Board, Journal of Nonverbal Behavior (1975-1986);  
Member of Editorial Board, Journal of Psycholinguistic Research (1971-1995); and  
Consulting Editor, The Journal of Psychology (1999-present).
5. My research expertise includes psychological measurement; statistical computing and theoretical analysis of complex data; authoring general theoretical models for description and measurement of personality, temperament, psychopathology; emotions, nonverbal communication, environments, or stimuli; man-environment relations (human factors); and improving worker productivity and morale.
6. My communications experience include authoring approximately 150 research publications (including 13 technical and mass market books); public speaking; teaching; and serving as a research supervisor.

7. I have received honors including:  
Mention Among 100-Most Cited Psychologists (Amer. Psych., 1978, v. 33, 1064-1082);  
One of 57 Eminent Psychologists Surveyed (Amer. Psych., May 1984, 556-559); and  
"Nonverbal Communication" book selected as a citation classic by Current Contents (1984).
8. I have evaluated the present invention and the cited art with respect to human factors.  
My findings are as follows:

**Psychological Significance of Solidly Colored Surfaces of High Chroma (Saturation):**

One feature of the present invention is its use of different **solid** colors of high chroma (i.e., high color saturation) to identify each power outlet on the power strip together with corresponding **solid** colors for cables and labels. Patent Number 5,775,935, in contrast, does not use solid colors, but uses color shading with colored lines or dots to identify outlets. Psychologically, there is a substantial advantage in using solid colors of high chroma (i.e., high purity or vividness of color), as in the present invention. The reason for this is that solid surfaces of a single high-chroma color elicit very high levels of arousal or attention. Put another way, solid high-chroma surfaces provide strong visual **stimulation** in humans.<sup>1</sup>

The high stimulation value of each solid high-chroma surface is also helpful when different high-chroma solid colors are juxtaposed next to one another, thereby enhancing **perceptual discrimination or perceptual contrast** (i.e., easy separation or distinction) of differently-colored outlets, cables, or labels from each other. Such perceptual discrimination is less likely when a common underlying color (e.g., grey) forms the background color of all outlets (e.g., what appears to be a surface that is grey, white, or black throughout, but is color shaded with diagonal lines or colored

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<sup>1</sup>Patricia Valdez and Albert Mehrabian, Effects of Color on Emotions, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General*, 123, pp. 394-409 (1994).

dots drawn over the background grey, white, or black (as in Patent 5,775,935, Fig. 3; col. 5, lines 7-10) or a large solid grey center in all outlets, with each grey-centered outlet surrounded with a narrow circumference of color (as in the Kensington device).

The Kensington device uses grey as the primary surface area of each outlet, with a narrow ring of color to surround that grey. Our laboratory study of chromatic and achromatic colors showed that the visual stimulation (arousal) value of high-chroma chromatic colors exceeds that of various shades of grey (which are achromatic colors).<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, perceptual discrimination of a multiplicity of outlets, at least eight (8) as in the present invention, is enhanced when **different** chromatic colors (not greys) are used and, furthermore, such discrimination is even greater when solidly colored surfaces are used (in contrast to the cited art that, as noted supra, appears to be color shading with lines of color or colored dots over an underlying surface that is grey, white, or black).

Considering that power strips are often located in out-of-the-way places (e.g., underneath desks or tables), they tend to be unexposed to direct lighting and are, thus, poorly or dimly lit. Under conditions of dim lighting, solid high-chroma colors are easier to see (are more arousing or perceptually stimulating) than color shaded surfaces (i.e., that appears to be patterned with color lines or dots, Patent 5,775,935, supra). Solid high-chroma colors (present invention) are also easier to see than surfaces that are predominantly grey, but are merely circled by narrow rings of color (Kensington device).

#### **The Power of Easily Learned Associations, Convenience, Flexibility & Ease of Use:**

In the best tradition of Human Factors Engineering, the present invention also enhances intuitive learning of **associations**. Same-colored and solidly-colored (a) outlets, (b) cables, (c) labels, and (d) adhesive color markers, together, form an easy, rapid, and highly intuitive set of associations which facilitate learning, remembering, and usage, as are provided by the present invention.

Overall, in contrast to the cited art, the present invention enhances **convenience**

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<sup>2</sup>*Id.*



(e.g., includes all necessary components: color-coded power strip, color cables, color labels, self-adhesive color markers that can be retrofittably attached to existing cables and to other peripheral devices). The present invention also incorporates enhanced **flexibility** (i.e., customized power strips that can include at least eight (8) outlets, ability to retrofit existing equipment and cables).

### **Applicability of Principles of Gestalt Theory to Present Invention:**

"Gestalt" in German means "organized whole." Gestalt theory was developed by Wolfgang Kohler, Kurt Koffka, and Max Wertheimer in the early 1900s to emphasize the fact that when several elements are combined into an **organized** whole, the total effect of the combination (the whole or totality) exceeds the sum of the effects of its parts.<sup>3</sup> Gestalt theory was applied to psychological studies of perception and is applicable to the present invention. For example, when a light source is placed on the rim of a wheel that is rolling along a flat surface, the perception is one of a succession of lighted inverted semi-circles. Also, when a light source is placed in the center of a wheel that is rolling along a flat surface, the perception is of a single dot of light that is moving horizontally. However, when a light source is placed on the rim and another light source is placed at the center of the wheel and the wheel rolls on a flat surface, one does not see those two separate elements, but instead sees a wheel that has a lit rim and lit center.

The point of Gestalt theory is that humans mentally process the parts into an organized whole that is substantially different from the parts and exceeds the effects of the parts. In the present invention, the elements (features) similarly form a whole that is greater than the sum of the features treated separately. The features are:

- a. color coding of the power strip using **solid** colors for each power outlet;
- b. power cords in solid colors to correspond to the colors in the power strip or, alternatively, colored stickers that can be attached to existing power cords supplied by manufacturers;

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<sup>3</sup>Lyle E. Bourne and Bruce R. Ekstrand, *Psychology: Its Principles and Meanings* 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed., pp. 24-25, Holt, Rinehart and Winston (1979).

- c. colored labels for retrofitting an existing power strip or, alternatively, colored stickers with labels that can be attached to existing cords and/or equipment; and
- d. at least eight (8) power outlets in conjunction with corresponding different solid colors for each outlet, this being a feature distinct from a fixed number of 4 power outlets of Patent 5,775,935.

Although some aspects of the elements can be found in the cited art, no reference nor combination of references teach, motivate, or suggest the present invention's common intuitive scheme comprising different-colored outlets, matching colored cords, matching colored labels with indicia, and matching colored adhesive markers that together form a powerful human factors matrix of psychological associations.

Importantly, from the standpoint of Gestalt Theory, the present invention incorporates **a system of mutually reinforcing associations that is founded on the use of color**. Use of high-chroma solid colors (rather than the cited art color rings around grey outlets and the cited art that appears to be color shading against a grey, white, or black background) in this scheme facilitates rapid and intuitive association of each peripheral device, its cable, and its outlet on the basis of a single, distinctive, and high-chroma color that stands apart from colors used for the remaining devices and their connectors. The preferred scheme maintains all of the foregoing elements within it. Thus, none of the cited references teach, motivate, or suggest the present invention combination of elements nor its **development and use color as an overarching organizing principle**. On the basis of these distinctions, the present invention provides a unique human factors feature for facilitating its electronic utility.

### Conclusion:

Thus, the present invention, entitled APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL POWER SOURCE, comprising a solid color-coded device having peripheral device identification, constitutes a solid color image which requires far less mental processing than required by the cited art that appears to be patterned color image (striped and ringed) devices, and therefore, provides superior visual perception, mental recognition, and mental retention of associations between each peripheral device and its corresponding housing portion.

9. I further declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Section 1001 of Title 18 of the United States Code, and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the above-references application or any patent issuing thereon.

Respectfully submitted,



Albert Mehrabian, Ph.D.

AM:mld  
November , 2000  
LARIVIERE, GRUBMAN & PAYNE, LLP  
Post Office Box 3140  
Monterey, CA 93942  
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Typed or Printed Name of Person Mailing Paper or Fee: Jennifer D. Morgan

Signature: 

PATENT  
DOCKET NO. P800

## PATENT APPLICATION

### APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL POWER SOURCE

INVENTOR: NOEL LEE

#### Related Application:

This application is related to co-pending Provisional Patent Application S/N 60/070,317, entitled: "APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A CENTRAL POWER SOURCE", filed January 2, 1998, by the same applicant.

#### Field of the Invention:

The present invention relates to power distribution apparatus and methods. More particularly, the present invention relates to AC power distribution apparatus and method for powering multiple electrical components that utilize a central power source commonly known as a power strip. Even more particularly, the present invention relates to AC power distribution apparatus and method that provide coding, such as color coding and labeling, to assure correct powering of corresponding remote peripheral electrical devices that are utilizing a common AC power strip.

#### Background of The Invention:

In home and business applications in which several electrical components, such as personal computer systems, home entertainment centers, and kitchen appliances, (see generally Fig. 1), a conveniently located AC power strip 20 is often provided which is connected to a wall outlet 11 providing AC power from a utility power source 10. The AC power strip 20 (with power cord 21 and plug end 21a), is usually provided with

overcurrent and noise protection elements, generally depicted as 22 in Fig. 1, to assure safe and high quality of AC power to a plurality of peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 attached to the AC power strip 20. As depicted, AC power strip 20 contains a plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n) for receiving an AC plug member (35a, 45a, and 55a) provided on the various AC power cords (35, 45, 55, (2) 45x, and 55x). As shown in Fig. 1, the various peripheral devices are not designed with identical means for receiving AC power. By example, a peripheral device 30 may have a fixedly attached power cord 35 with adequate length and type of plug 35a that plugs directly to a mating outlet receptacle 23a on AC power strip 20. Another same device 30 may require an electrical power cord extension 45x because power cord 35 does not have an adequate length. A second device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75 and plug 75a may be provided with AC power from a second ~~power cord 45x~~. Still another device 40 may be provided with only a plug means 41 for receiving power from a power cord 45 with mating receptacle 45b. Yet another device 50 may be provided with a receptacle power inlet means 51 for receiving power from a, perhaps unsafe, power cord 55 having a mating plug 55b. Another device 60 may have a short power cord 65 with receptacle 65a for receiving power from a longer power cord 55x having plug 55b. The attachment cords and the power distribution power strips of the prior art have not been color coded coordinated to achieve connection to the desired peripheral device. The net of the power attachment task has led to confusion as to which device has been plugged to the power strip 20. Thus, a need is seen to exist for a power distribution apparatus and method having a code means for minimizing the confusion associated with powering multiple peripheral electrical device to an AC power strip.

Although prior art, such as U.S. Patent Nos. 5,589,718 and 5,115,368 and U.S. Patent Application No. 08/164,148 have taught the concept of color coding and labeling of AC outlet receptacles, coding of cable terminals with coded geometric structure, coding of power line conditioners and functional cabling for home entertainment systems, such as audio and video system, the problem of ascertaining correct power distribution to peripheral devices is still seen to exist. The prior art has not solved the problem of powering the correct peripheral device by providing a dedicated color coding associated only with AC power distribution from an AC power strip.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a color-coded apparatus and method that provides a user a straight-forward way of powering peripheral devices connected to the common power distribution power apparatus source, such as an AC power strip.

Another particular object of the present invention is to provide a indicia-oriented apparatus and method for powering peripheral devices connected to a common power distribution source, such as an AC power strip.

#### Brief Summary of The Invention:

The foregoing objects are accomplished by providing in one embodiment of the invention, an AC power distribution apparatus comprising a power strip apparatus, a plurality of power cords and a plurality of indicia elements. The power strip apparatus comprises a housing with a plurality of AC outlet portions for providing AC power to the same plurality of peripheral electrical devices. Each AC outlet housing portion being colored with a first color that is different from another AC outlet housing portion. The plurality of power cords comprise a power cord colored to match said first color. The remaining power cords of the plurality of power cords, comprise power cords colored to match each of the other colors on the power strip. The indicia elements are, by example, an adhesive-backing type label having a color that matches the color of the power cord and the corresponding color of the AC outlet housing portion. The indicia elements also comprise identifying information about the peripheral device to be powered.

Another embodiment of the present invention comprises a kit of a plurality of indicia element sets for labeling a respective power strip AC outlet portion, power cord terminals and the peripheral device to which AC power is desired to be distributed. The kit is useful in retro-fitting after-market ac power strip product. ①

The method consists of the steps of providing the color coded power strip, the color coded power cords and color coded indicia elements with identification of the peripheral device and systematically assigning a color to a particular peripheral device to which that particular color is to be associated, and then attaching the color coded power cable to the corresponding AC outlet portion on the AC power strip.

Alternatively, the method may be that of providing the kit with indicia elements and assigning a particular color to a peripheral device, then applying the indicia to the power strip AC outlet portion, the power cord terminal ends and to the particular peripheral device.

does not suggest reassignment

Therefore, to the accomplishments of the foregoing objects, the invention consists of the foregoing structure and features hereinafter fully described and particularly pointed out in the accompanying drawings and the following disclosure describing in detail the invention, such drawings and disclosure illustrating but one of the various ways in which the invention may be practiced.

#### Brief Description of The Drawings:

Fig. 1 shows a prior art block diagram representation of an AC power distribution arrangement illustrating particular powering configurations that exemplify the problem of matching the correct power cord to a peripheral electrical device.

Fig. 2 shows the same arrangement as depicted in Fig. 1, except that the power strip, power cords and peripheral devices comprise the colored indicia elements of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a power strip in accordance with the present invention having color coded AC outlet portions provided with color-coded portions either by direct manufacturing, or by applying an appropriate colored label to the AC outlet portion, in accordance with the present invention. ← non-enabling

Reference numbers refer to the same or equivalent parts of the present invention throughout the several figures of the drawing.

#### Description of The Preferred Embodiment:

Referring to Fig. 1, where, by example, a home, or business application, comprising peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 being powered from an AC power strip 20. As depicted, the devices are powered from a conveniently located AC power strip 20 which is connected to a wall outlet 11 providing AC power from a utility power source 10. The AC power strip 20, with power cord 21 and plug end 21a, is usually provided with overcurrent and noise protection elements, generally depicted as 22 in Fig.

1, to assure safe and high quality of AC power to the peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 attached to the AC power strip 20. Also as depicted, AC power strip 20 contains a main 23 powering a plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n) for receiving an AC plug member (35a, 45a, and 55a) on the various AC power cords (35, 45, 55, (2) 45x, and 55x). As discussed earlier, while the peripheral devices are not designed with identical means for receiving AC power, the power cords look very similar such that the net of the power attachment task creates confusion as to which device has been plugged to the power strip 20. The confusion is created due to the large variety of powering schemes and power cord devices. As discussed earlier, a peripheral device 30 may have a power cord 35 with adequate length and type of plug 35a that plugs directly to a mating outlet receptacle 23a on AC power strip 20. Another same device 30 may require an electrical power cord extension 45x because power cord 35 does not have an adequate length. A second device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75 and plug 75a may be provided with AC power from a second power cord 45x. Still another device 40 may be provided with only a plug means 41 for receiving power from a power cord 45 with mating receptacle 45b. Yet another device 50 may be provided with a receptacle power inlet means 51 for receiving power from a, perhaps unsafe, power cord 55 having a mating plug 55b. Another device 60 may have a short power cord 65 with receptacle 65a for receiving power from a longer power cord 55x having plug 55b.

Fig. 2 shows the same arrangement as depicted in Fig. 1, except that the arrangement is provided with a power strip 20N, and a plurality of color coded power cords and colored indicia elements in accordance with the present invention. As depicted, AC power strip 20N now contains a plurality of colored <sup>portion</sup> partitions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx associated with a corresponding plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n). Preferably, a power cord having the same color as a particular colored portion on the power strip is provided. Further, a matching colored indicia element is provided for being placed on a particular peripheral device, or power cord of the device being powered. Each colored <sup>portion</sup> partition C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx comprises indicia that identifies the peripheral that will receive power from the corresponding AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n). Accordingly, a



peripheral device 30 is powered from a power cord 35 with plug 35a having an indicia Ic1 applied to the terminal end. Another device 30 with power cord 35 having an indicia Ic4 applied at, or near its plug end 35a is powered from a colored electrical power cord extension 45xc4. Extension cord 45xc4 is typical of multi-colored cords which may be provided with the kit. The length of the colored extension cords would vary and may, by example be provided in a range from 6 feet to 100 feet. Still referring to Fig. 2, device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75, having indicia Icx applied at or near plug 75a, is now powered from AC power strip 20N via power cord 45xcx. Device 40, provided with plug means 41, is now provided with an indicia Ic2 applied proximate plug means 41 and now receives power from a colored power cord 45c2. Device 50 is now provided with plug means 51 having an indicia Ic3 proximately applied, and now receives power from a colored power cord 55c3. Similarly, device 60 is now provided with power cord 65 having plug means 65a having an indicia Ic5 proximately applied, and now receives power from a colored power cord 55xc5.

→ Fig. 3 shows power strip 20N in accordance with the present invention having color coded AC outlet portions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx permanently provided at time of manufacturing with the colored portions, or after market, by applying an appropriate colored labels or indicia Ic1, Ic2, Ic3, Ic4, Ic5 and Icx to the outlet portions of an AC power strip not provided with permanent color coded portions, in accordance with the present invention. The colored portions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx and the colored labels or indicia Ic1, Ic2, Ic3, Ic4, Ic5 and Icx, attachable to the outlet portions of the AC power strip 20N, may include the identifying information of the particular peripheral device to be powered. By example, indicia with the appropriate peripheral device 30, 40, 50, 60, or 70 identity may be imprinted on the indicia.

Modifications may include modifying a particular power cord such that only the terminal housing ends are colored, or a power cord may have the complete cable insulation jacket and power terminal housing colored as well. The power cords may have terminal ends designated as the power source end, or as the device attachment end. If a particular peripheral device's power cord is to plug directly to the AC power strip, then an indicia element having the same color would be applied to the plug end of the device's power cord to match a corresponding same colored portion C1, C2, C3, C4, C5

and Cx, or indicia Ic1, Ic2, Ic3, Ic4, Ic5 and Icx on the power strip with that particular peripheral device identity information on the colored portion or indicia. Similarly, if the peripheral device only has a plug/receptacle power input means, then an indicia element would be applied to the peripheral device for powering from a designated outlet on the power strip.

Therefore, while the present invention has been shown and described herein in what is believed to be the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is recognized that departures can be made therefrom within the scope of the invention, which scope is therefore not to be limited to the details disclosed herein but is to be accorded the full scope of the claims so as to embrace any and all equivalent apparatus.

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## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

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1. An AC electrical power strip apparatus, said apparatus comprising:
    - an input power cord member;
    - an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member;
    - a plurality of electrical output receptacle sets electrically coupled to said main, each receptacle set defining an AC electrical outlet circuit surrounded by an outlet body structure;
    - a housing member, said housing member having inlet means for receiving an end of said input cord and for providing a secured, insulated housing for said receptacle sets, said housing member having a plurality of partitioned access means for facilitating electrical engagement with a respective receptacle set including said outlet body structure surrounding said AC electrical outlet circuit; and
    - each outlet body structure being colored a different color than other outlet body structures on said AC power strip apparatus.
  2. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein:
    - each access means being separated by a partition region having an indicia means for identifying a particular peripheral device to be electrically engaged to a receptacle set via a respective access means.
  3. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 2, wherein:
    - a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said power strip apparatus, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure to be utilized for powering a particular peripheral device.
  4. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 3, wherein:
    - said plurality of multi-colored stickers including colored stickers matching a color of said outlet body structure and provided for being attached to said peripheral device

being powered from said electrical cord.

5. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 1, wherein:  
a plurality of multi-colored electrical extension cords are provided for selective attachment to said power strip apparatus, each attached electrical extension cord being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure being utilized for powering a particular peripheral device.

6. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 5, wherein:  
a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said electrical extension cord, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure and the color of an electrical extension cord being utilized.

7. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 6, wherein:  
a similarly colored sticker matching a color of said outlet body structure and said electrical extension cord being utilized, is provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical extension cord.

8. An AC electrical power strip apparatus, said apparatus comprising:  
an input power cord member;  
an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member;

a plurality of electrical output receptacle sets electrically coupled to said main, each receptacle set defining an AC electrical outlet circuit surrounded by an outlet body structure;

a housing member, said housing member having inlet means for receiving an end of said input cord and for providing a secured, insulated housing for said receptacle sets, said housing member having a plurality of partitioned access means for facilitating electrical engagement with a respective receptacle set including said outlet body structure of said AC electrical outlet circuit;

wherein each access means being separated by a partition regions having an indicia means for identifying a particular peripheral device to be electrically engaged to a receptacle set via a respective access means.

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- Q**
- R**
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- X**
- Y**
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13. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 12, wherein:  
a similarly colored sticker matching a color of said outlet body structure and said electrical extension cord being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical extension cord.

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A 11

14. An AC electrical power strip apparatus, said apparatus comprising:  
an input power cord member;  
an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member;

5 a plurality of electrical output receptacle sets electrically coupled to said main, each receptacle set defining an AC electrical outlet circuit surrounded by an outlet body structure;

a housing member, said housing member having inlet means for receiving an end of said input cord and for providing a secured, insulated housing for said receptacle sets, said housing member having a plurality of partitioned access means for facilitating electrical engagement with a respective receptacle set including said body structure of said AC electrical outlet circuit, and

wherein each outlet body structure being provided with a colored sticker means for distinguishing respective AC electrical outlet circuits delineated by said plurality of partitioned access means, each colored sticker means being colored a different color than other colored sticker means provided on other body structures on said AC electrical power strip apparatus.

15. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 14, wherein:

a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said power strip apparatus, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the colored sticker means provided on said outlet body structure.

16. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 15, wherein:

a similarly colored sticker matching said colored sticker means provided on said outlet body structure being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical cord.

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17. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 14, wherein:

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A 12  
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a plurality of multi-colored electrical extension cords are provided for selective attachment to said power strip apparatus, each electrical extension cord being selected such that its color matches a color of the colored sticker means provided on said outlet body structure being utilized.

18. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 17, wherein:  
a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said electrical extension cord, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the colored sticker means and the color of an electrical extension cord being utilized.

19. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 18, wherein:  
a similarly colored sticker matching a color of said colored sticker means and said electrical extension cord being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical extension cord.

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20. An AC electrical power strip apparatus, said apparatus comprising:  
an input power cord member;  
an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member;

5 a plurality of electrical output receptacle sets electrically coupled to said main, each receptacle set defining an AC electrical outlet circuit surrounded by an outlet body structure;

10 a housing member, said housing member having inlet means for receiving an end of said input cord and for providing a secured, insulated housing for said receptacle sets, said housing member having a plurality of partitioned access means for facilitating electrical engagement with a respective receptacle set including said body structure of said AC electrical outlet circuit; and

each outlet body structure being colored a different color than other outlet body structures on other receptacle sets in said AC electrical outlet circuit,

15 wherein a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment

to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said power strip apparatus, each colored sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure to be utilized for powering a particular peripheral device, and

wherein a similarly colored sticker matching said outlet body structure being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical cord.

21. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 20, wherein:  
each access means being separated by a partition regions having an indicia means for identifying a particular peripheral device to be electrically engaged to a receptacle set via a respective access means.

22. A method of providing AC power to peripheral devices, said method comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing an AC power strip;
- (b) providing multi-colored AC outlet portions on said AC power strip, each AC outlet portion being colored a different color than other AC outlet portions on said AC power strip;
- (c) providing a plurality of multi-colored stickers for use to tag a power cord belonging to a particular peripheral device;
- (d) providing an indicia elements on each AC outlet portion with identification information of a peripheral device to be plugged to a particular AC outlet portion;
- (e) assigning a color to a particular peripheral device to which that particular color is to be associated;
- (f) tagging a power cord with one of said provided multi-stickers, said one sticker having a color according to step (e); and
- (g) attaching the tagged color-coded power cord to the corresponding colored AC outlet portion on the AC power strip.

23. An AC electrical power strip apparatus, said apparatus comprising:  
an input power cord member;

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an electrical distribution main electrically coupled to said input power cord member;

a plurality of electrical output receptacle sets electrically coupled to said main, each receptacle set defining an AC electrical outlet circuit surrounded by an outlet body structure;

a housing member, said housing member having inlet means for receiving an end of said input cord and for providing a secured, insulated housing for said receptacle sets, said housing member having a plurality of partitioned access means for facilitating electrical engagement with a respective receptacle set including said outlet body structure of said AC electrical outlet circuit; and

wherein each access means being separated by a partition regions having an indicia means for identifying a particular peripheral device to be electrically engaged to a receptacle set via a respective access means.

24. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 23, wherein:

each outlet body structure being colored a different color than other outlet body structures on other receptacle sets in said AC electrical outlet circuit; and

said apparatus further includes a plurality of multi-colored stickers provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said power strip apparatus, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure being utilized.

25. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 24, wherein:

a similarly colored sticker matching said outlet body structure being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical cord.

26. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 24, wherein:

a plurality of multi-colored electrical extension cords are provided for selective attachment to said power strip apparatus, each electrical extension cord being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure being utilized.

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27. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 26, wherein:  
a plurality of multi-colored stickers are provided for selective attachment to an electrical cord providing power to a peripheral device utilizing said electrical extension cord, each sticker being selected such that its color matches a color of the outlet body structure and the color of an electrical extension cord being utilized.

28. An AC electrical power strip apparatus as described in claim 27, wherein:  
a similarly colored sticker matching a color of said outlet body structure and said electrical extension cord being provided for being attached to said peripheral device being powered from said electrical extension cord.

[illegible]

# APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL DEVICES FROM A COLOR-CODED CENTRAL POWER SOURCE

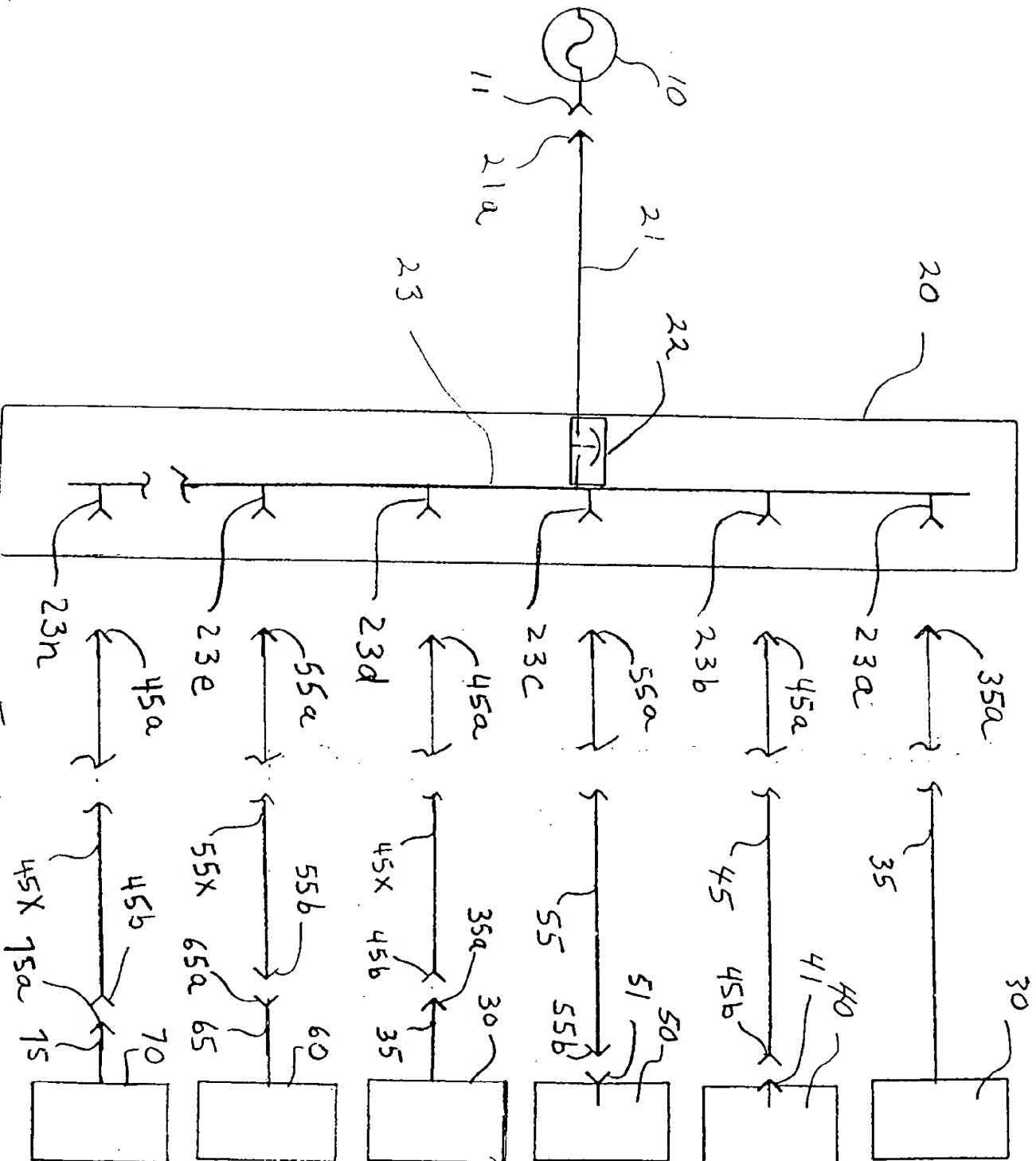
## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

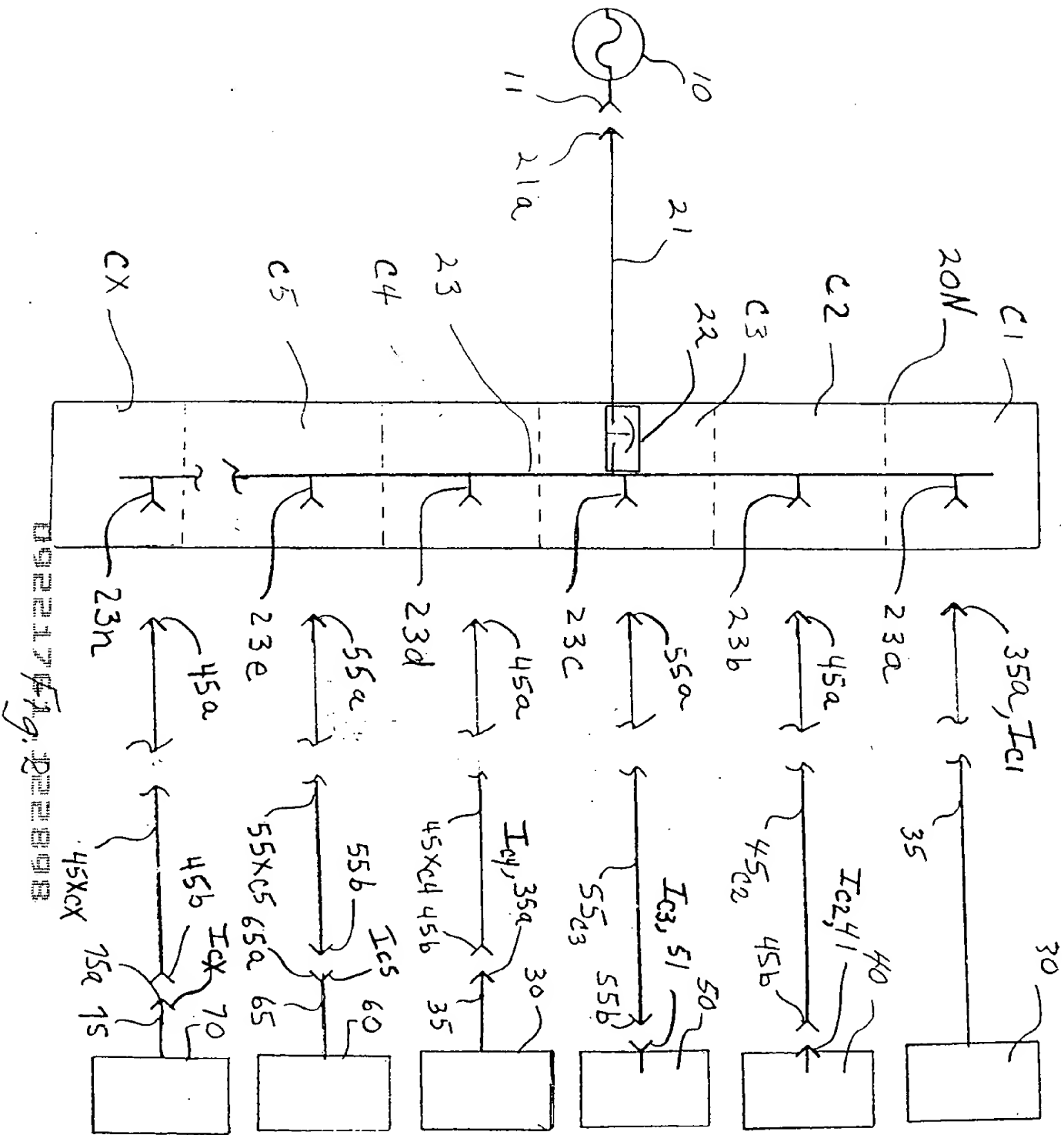
An AC power strip with a plurality of power cord receptacles for powering a similar plurality of peripheral devices. In a preferred embodiment the AC power strip includes a housing provided with a plurality of multi-colored AC outlet housing portions each colored a different color to allow allocation of a particular color for a selected peripheral device. Multi-colored stickers and indicia elements are provided to tag power cords of peripheral devices with a selected colored sticker and indicia element. The outlet portions are also provided with an indicia element for identifying the particular peripheral device to be plugged to that AC outlet. Other embodiments include multi-colored sticker and indicia element to modify an existing AC power strip to perform the same objects of the invention. In yet another embodiment, multi-colored extension cords are provided for attaching to a matching colored ac outlet portion.

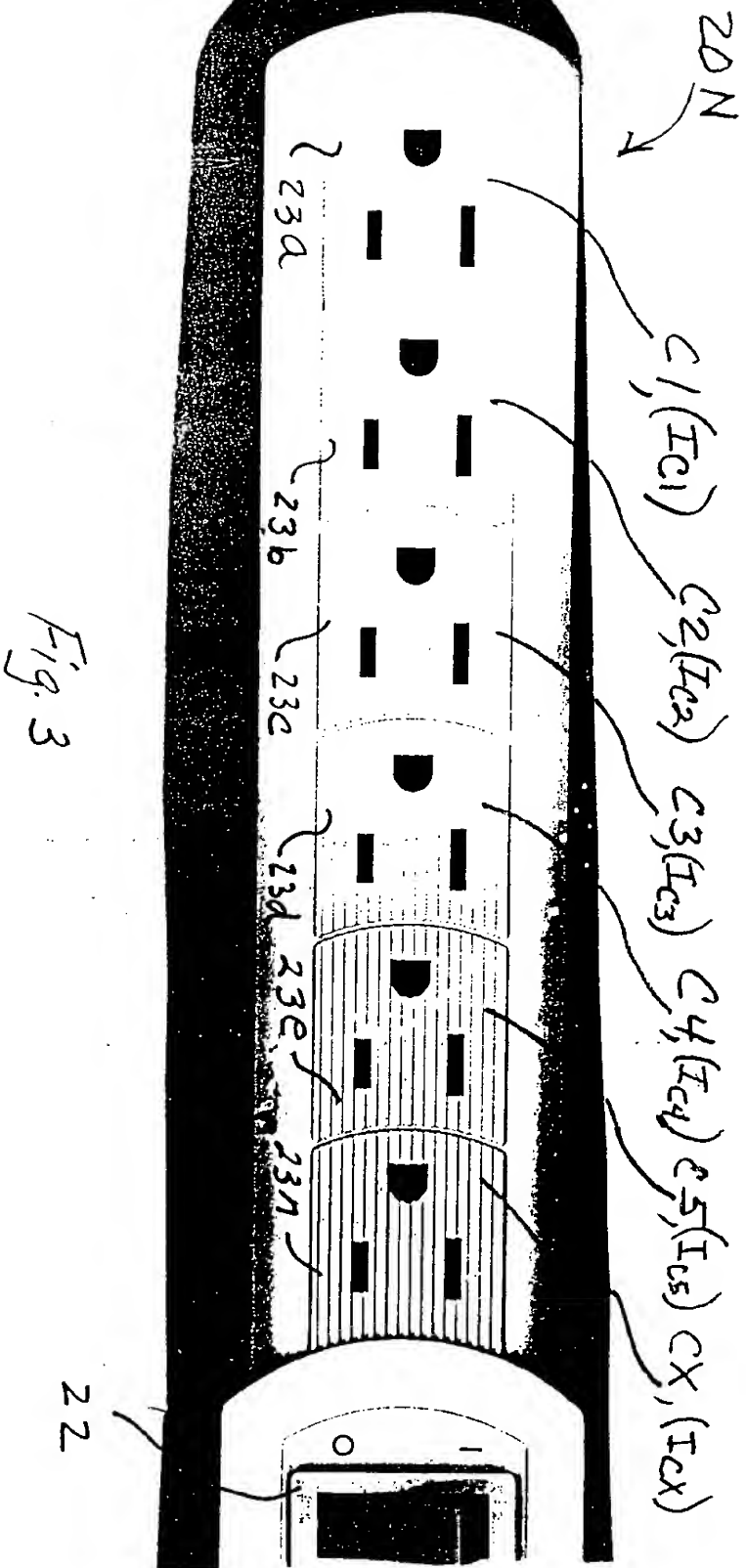
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Typed or Printed Name:

or Fee: Sharlene Jacoban

Signature: *[Handwritten Signature]*

*Provisional  
filed  
1/2/98*

Patent

Docket No. P800

to: LEE, NOEL

APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR POWERING MULTIPLE PERIPHERAL  
DEVICES FROM A CENTRAL POWER SOURCE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION:

The present invention relates to power distribution apparatus and methods. More particularly, the present invention relates to AC power distribution apparatus and method for powering multiple electrical components that utilize a central power source commonly known as a power strip. Exen more particularly, the present invention relates to AC power distribution apparatus and method that provide coding, such as color coding, to assure correct powering of corresponding remote peripheral electrical devices that are utilizing a common AC power strip.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION:

In home and business applications in which several electrical components, such as personal computer systems, home entertainment centers, and kitchen appliances, (see generally Fig. 1), a conveniently located AC power strip 20 is often provided which is connected to a wall outlet 11 providing AC power from a utility power source 10. The AC power strip 20 (with power cord 21 and plug end 21a), is usually provided with overcurrent and noise protection elements, generally depicted as 22 in Fig. 1, to assure safe and high quality of AC power to the peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 attached to the AC power strip 20. As depicted, AC power strip 20 contains a plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n) for receiving an AC plug member (35a, 45a, and 55a) on the various AC power cords (35, 45, 55, (2) 45x, and 55x). As shown in Fig. 1, the peripheral devices are not designed with identical means for receiving AC power. By example, a peripheral device 30 may have a power

cord 35 with adequate length and type of plug 35a that plugs directly to a mating outlet receptacle 23a on AC power strip 20. The another same device 30 may require an electrical power cord extension 45x because power cord 35 does not have an adequate length. A second device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75 and plug 75a may be provided with AC power from a second power cord 45x. Still another device 40 may be provided with only a plug means 41 for receiving power from a power cord 45 with mating receptacle 45b. Yet another device 50 may be provided with a receptacle power inlet means 51 for receiving power from a, perhaps unsafe, power cord 55 having a mating plug 55b. Another device 60 may have a short power cord 65 with receptacle 65a for receiving power from a longer power cord 55x having plug 55b. The net of the power attachment task has led to confusion as to which device has been plugged to the power strip 20. Thus, a need is seen to exist for an power distribution apparatus and method having a code means for minimizing the confusion associated with powering multiple peripheral electrical device to an AC power strip.

Although the concept of color coding, see generally U.S. Patent No. 5,589,718, and coding of cable terminals with coded geometric structure, see generally U.S. Patent application No. 08/164,148, has been applied to power line conditioners and to functional cabling for home entertainment systems, such as audio and video system, the problem of ascertaining correct power distribution to peripheral devices is still seen to exist. The prior art has attempted to solve the problem of powering the correct peripheral device by combining the coding solution with coded non-power functional cabling, rather than a dedicated coding associated AC power distribution from an AC power strip.

Accordingly, it is a primary object of the present invention to provide a coded power distribution apparatus and method that provides a user a straight-forward way of powering peripheral devices connected to a common power source, such as an AC power strip.

A particular object of the present invention is to provide a color coded apparatus and method for powering peripheral devices connected to a common power source, such as an AC power strip.

Another particular object of the present invention is to provide a indicia-oriented



apparatus and method for powering peripheral devices connected to a common power source, such as an AC power strip.

#### BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION:

5 The foregoing objects are accomplished by providing in one embodiment of the invention, an AC power distribution apparatus comprising a power strip apparatus, a plurality of power cords and a plurality of indicia elements. The power strip apparatus comprises a housing with a plurality of AC outlet portions for providing AC power to the same plurality of peripheral electrical devices. Each AC outlet housing portion  
10 being colored with a first color that is different from another AC outlet housing portion. The plurality of power cords comprise a power cord colored to match said first color. The remaining power cords of the plurality of power cords, comprise power cords colored to match each of the other colors on the power strip. The indicia elements are, by example, an adhesive-backing type label having a color that matches the color of the power cord and the corresponding color of the AC outlet housing  
15 portion.

Another embodiment of the present invention comprises a kit of a plurality of indicia element sets for labeling a respective power strip AC outlet portion, power cord terminals and the peripheral device to which AC power is desired to be distributed. The kit is useful in retro-fitting after-market product.  
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The method consists of the steps of providing the color coded power strip, the color coded power cords and color coded indicia elements and systematically assigning a color to a particular peripheral device to which that particular color is to be associated, and then attaching the color coded power cable to the corresponding AC outlet portion on the AC power strip. Alternatively, the method may be that of  
25 providing the kit with indicia elements and assigning a particular color to a peripheral device, then applying the indicia to the power strip AC outlet portion, the power cord terminal ends and to the particular peripheral device.

Therefore, to the accomplishments of the foregoing objects, the invention  
30 consists of the foregoing structure and features hereinafter fully described and particularly pointed out in the accompanying drawings and the following disclosure describing in detail the invention, such drawings and disclosure illustrating but one of

the various ways in which the invention may be practiced.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS:

Fig. 1 shows a prior art block diagram representation of an AC power distribution arrangement illustrating the problem of matching the correct power cord to a peripheral electrical device.

Fig. 2 shows the same arrangement as depicted in Fig. 1, except that the power strip, power cords and peripheral devices comprise the colored indicia elements of the present invention.

Fig. 3 is a power strip in accordance with the present invention having color coded AC outlet portions provided either by direct manufacturing with the colored portions, or by applying an appropriate colored label tot the Ac outlet portion, in accordance with the present invention.

Reference numbers refer to the same or equivalent parts of the present invention throughout the several figures of the drawing.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT:

Referring to Fig. 1, where, by example, a home, or business application, comprising peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 being powered from an AC power strip 20. As depicted, the devices are powered from a conveniently located AC power strip 20 which is connected to a wall outlet 11 providing AC power from a utility power source 10. The AC power strip 20, with power cord 21 and plug end 21a, is usually provided with overcurrent and noise protection elements, generally depicted as 22 in Fig. 1, to assure safe and high quality of AC power to the peripheral devices 30, 40, 50, 60, and 70 attached to the AC power strip 20. Also as depicted, AC power strip 20 contains a main 23 powering a plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,..., n) for receiving an AC plug member (35a, 45a, and 55a) on the various AC power cords (35, 45, 55, (2) 45x, and 55x). As discussed earlier, while the peripheral devices are not designed with identical means for receiving AC power, the power cords look very similar such that the net of the power attachment task creates confusion as to which device has been plugged to the power strip 20. The confusion is created due to the large variety of powering schemes and power cord

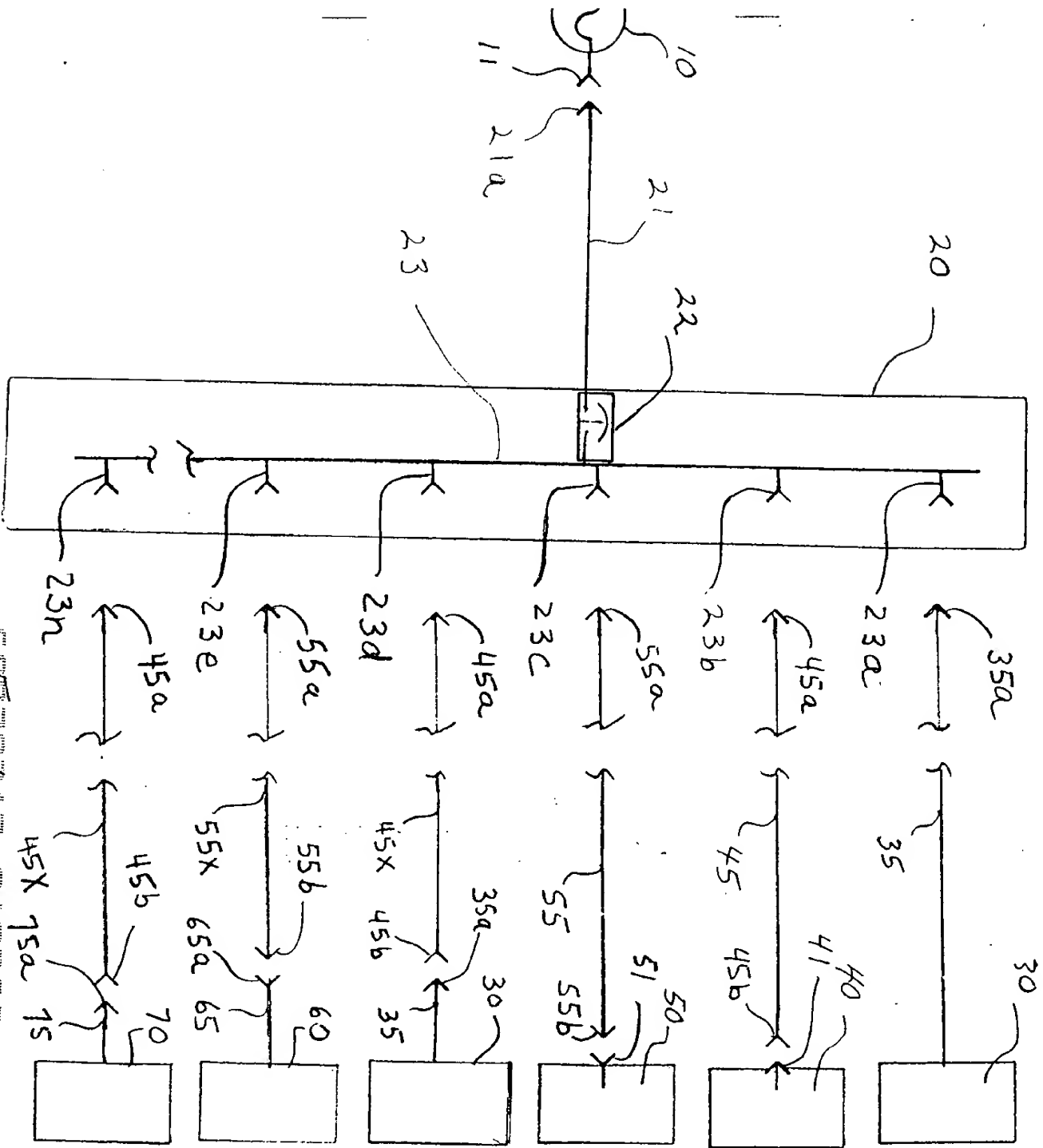
devices. As discussed earlier, a peripheral device 30 may have a power cord 35 with adequate length and type of plug 35a that plugs directly to a mating outlet receptacle 23a on AC power strip 20. Another same device 30 may require an electrical power cord extension 45x because power cord 35 does not have an adequate length. A second device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75 and plug 75a may be provided with AC power from a second power cord 45x. Still another device 40 may be provided with only a plug means 41 for receiving power from a power cord 45 with mating receptacle 45b. Yet another device 50 may be provided with a receptacle power inlet means 51 for receiving power from a, perhaps unsafe, power cord 55 having a mating plug 55b. Another device 60 may have a short power cord 65 with receptacle 65a for receiving power from a longer power cord 55x having plug 55b.

Fig. 2 shows the same arrangement as depicted in Fig. 1, except that the arrangement is provided with a power strip 20N, and a plurality of color coded power cords and colored indicia elements in accordance with the present invention. As depicted, AC power strip 20N now contains a plurality of colored partitions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx associated with a corresponding plurality of AC power outlet receptacles 23(a, b, c, d, e,...,n). A power cord having the same color as a particular colored portion on the power strip is provided. Further, a matching colored indicia element is provided for being placed on a particular peripheral device, or power cord of the device being powered. Accordingly, a peripheral device 30 is powered from a power cord 35 with plug 35a having an indicia Ic1 applied to the terminal end. Another device 30 with power cord 35 having an indicia Ic4 applied to its plug end 35a is powered from a colored electrical power cord extension 45xc4. Device 70, similar to device 30, with power cord 75, having indicia Icx applied to plug 75a, is now powered from AC power strip 20N via power cord 45xcx. Device 40 is now provided with plug means 41 having an indicia Ic2 applied, and now receives power from a colored power cord 45c2. Device 50 is now provided with plug means 11 having an indicia Ic3 applied, and now receives power from a colored power cord 55c3. Similarly, device 60 is now provided with power cord 65 having plug means 65a having an indicia Ic5 applied, and now receives power from a colored power cord 55xc5.

Fig. 3 shows power strip 20N in accordance with the present invention having color coded AC outlet portions C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and Cx provided either by direct manufacturing with the colored portions, or by applying an appropriate colored labels or indicia Ic1, Ic2, Ic3, Ic4, Ic5 and Icx to the A outlet portions on the AC power strip 20N, in accordance with the present invention.

Modification may include modifying a particular power cord such that only the terminal housing ends are colored, or a power cord may have the complete cable insulation jacket and power terminal housing colored as well. The power cords may have terminal ends designated as the power source end, or as the device attachment end. If a particular peripheral device's power cord is to plug directly to the AC power strip, then an indicia element having the same color would be applied to the plug end of the device's power cord. Similarly, if the peripheral device only has a plug/receptacle power input means, then an indicia element would be applied to the peripheral device.

Therefore, while the present invention has been shown and described herein in what is believed to be the most practical and preferred embodiment, it is recognized that departures can be made therefrom within the scope of the invention, which scope is therefore not to be limited to the details disclosed herein but is to be accorded the full scope of the claims so as to embrace any and all equivalent apparatus.



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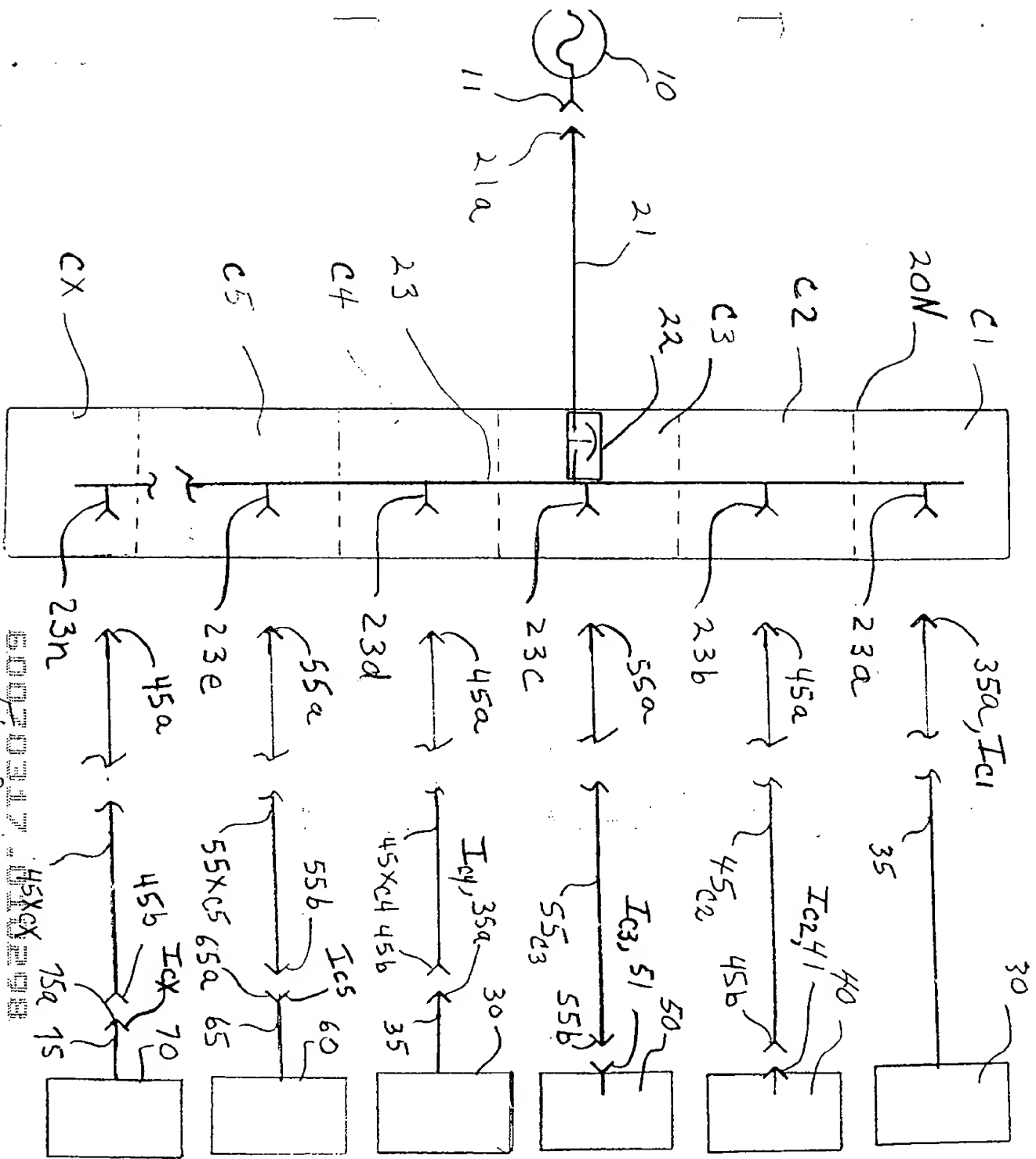


FIG. 2

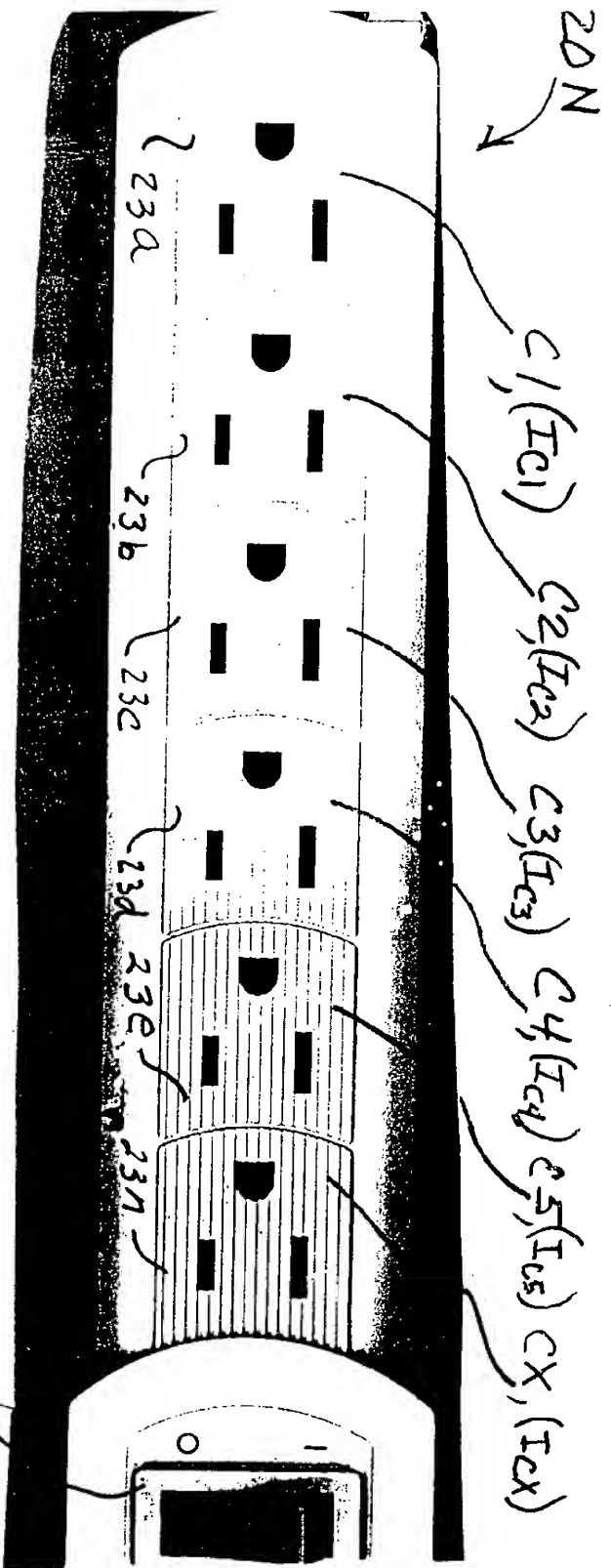


Fig. 3